



U.S. Department of Justice

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MEDIA RELEASE

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NASHUA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO PASSPORT AND IDENTITY FRAUD

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE: United States Attorney Tom Colantuono announced today that Sergio Mendoza, age 40 of Mexico, currently residing at 62 Chestnut Street, Nashua, NH, pleaded guilty in U. S. District Court Friday to charges of Passport Fraud (Title 18 U.S.C. 1542), Identity Fraud (Title 18 U.S.C. 1028) and Social Security Fraud (Title 42 U.S.C. 408). He is scheduled to be sentenced by United States Chief Judge, Paul J. Barbadoro, on April 14, 2003. He faces a maximum sentence of 18 years in prison and a \$750,000 fine. He also faces potential deportation following his prison sentence.

One December 12, 2002, Mr. Mendoza filed a fraudulent application for a United States Passport at the U.S. Post Office on Spring Street in Nashua, NH. In that application he claimed to be "Luis Rivera Escribano" and presented a Puerto Rican Birth Certificate and a New Hampshire Driver's License in that name. Upon investigation by the United States Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service, it was learned that the real Mr. Escribano had died in Puerto Rico on November 11, 2002 and that his identity had been stolen.

Mendoza was indicted by a federal Grand Jury on February 13, 2003, and he was arrested by federal agents on February 28, 2003. He has been held in custody since his arrest.

After the plea of guilty was entered U.S. Attorney Tom Colantuono stated: "This case is one of many being prosecuted as part of an initiative by this office to punish individuals who falsely claim to be United States citizens to obtain a U. S. passport, the world's most valuable identification document." This case was jointly investigated by the U. S. Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service, the U. S. Postal Inspection Service and the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General with assistance from the Nashua Police Department. It was prosecuted by Assistant U. S. Attorney Arnold Huftalen.